

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BY

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THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERALISM AND THE CENSUS

CONGRESSMAN MICHAEL R. TURNER, CHAIRMAN

MAY 16, 2005

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this important discussion. I am Frank Sarosy, Mayor of the Village of Fairport Harbor, OH. On behalf of my community, I would like to discuss how one brownfield remediation has had a positive impact on my community.

Fairport Harbor is an ideal community sitting on the shores of Lake Erie. On the eastern edge of our village, however, there had been a large and vacant parcel of land that had sat unused for years. This land was formerly the home of the Diamond Shamrock Painesville Works. It was more than 1,000 acres of land that straddles Fairport Harbor, the City of Painesville and Painesville Township.

This was some of our most desirable lakefront property, hugging the shoreline atop a scenic stretch of bluffs. We could not capitalize on it, however, because its former use as the home of Diamond Shamrock had left it a major brownfield site.

The land had been put to many uses over the years, such as serving as a 500-acre settling pond, as a home to heavy manufacturing and as a landfill. In 1980, the U.S. EPA initiated action to remedy chromium contamination at the site, which resulted in the construction of a 120-acre clay cap over the impacted area. The Ohio EPA began enforcement activities for the rest of the site in 1989.

This property was a perfect example of how a brownfield can affect a community. At its height, the Diamond Shamrock property employed more than 3,000 people. After it closed in 1976, Fairport Harbor lost not only those jobs, but also the use of this land. Until we could find some way to remedy the contamination of the land, it would remain idle and unused.

Fortunately, Hemisphere Development stepped into the picture in 2002. Their president, Todd Davis, brought his nationally recognized expertise to bear on this project and put forward a vision that will change Fairport Harbor and neighboring communities.

In a partnership with Fairport Harbor, the Ohio EPA, Lake County, Lake County Metroparks, and local municipalities, Hemisphere has developed a plan for redeveloping the site.

The formerly unusable Diamond Shamrock site is now known as Lakeview Bluffs and, once completed, it will be a national model for brownfield redevelopment. The mixed-use project will feature a variety of housing options, commercial development and public parks -- not to mention breathtaking views of Lake Erie and some of the best steelhead trout fishing in the world.

Hemisphere is creating several recreational destinations linked by aesthetically pleasing trails, permanent public access to the Grand River, a commercial vineyard, a trout club, a winery, and new residential development overlooking both Lake Erie and the Grand River.

The land's many rich endowments include more than a linear mile of shoreline, break wall protection for the development of a commercial marina in the harbor, and a stretch of the scenic Grand River that is renowned by fishermen as one of the best spots in the nation for catching steelhead trout.

Lakeview Bluffs represents an unprecedented opportunity to resolve years of contentious litigation and reclaim one of Ohio's most promising brownfield sites. Ultimately, the project will be one of the largest and most comprehensive brownfield redevelopments in the United States, serving as a national model for the effective integration of green space planning, reclamation and redevelopment. Further, the project represents the best example of the amazing community transformation that can occur through the power of public private partnerships.